

Message Text

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TAGS: OVIP (KISSINGER, HENRY A.)

SUBJECT: RADIO/TV REPORTS, MORNING, FEBRUARY 13

FOR AMBASSADOR ANDERSON FROM S/PRS

NO. 14

RADIO/TV

1. KALB (CBS TV, DAMASCUS): KISSINGER SPENT MORE THAN SIX HOURS WITH SADAT DISCUSSING VARIOUS FORMULAS FOR BRIDGING THE STILL-DEEP CHASM SEPARATING ISRAEL AND EGYPT FROM ANOTHER SINAI AGREEMENT. ALTHOUGH ON HIS DEPARTURE FROM CAIRO HE DESCRIBED HIS TALKS THERE AS VERY POSITIVE, REPORTERS WERE LEFT WITH A DIFFERENT IMPRESSION ON THE ONE-HOUR FLIGHT INTO DAMASCUS. WHILE OFFICIALS DID NOT RETRACT KISSINGER'S PUBLIC OPTIMISM, THEY SUGGESTED THAT BOTH SIDES ARE STILL CLINGING TO POSITIONS THEY KNOW THEIR ADVERSARIES CANNOT ACCEPT. KISSINGER IS DESCRIBED AS BELIEVING THE SITUATION IS NOT HOPELESS: "WE ARE STILL IN BUSINESS," HE TOLD REPORTERS; BUT HIS TONE CONVEYED ANYTHING BUT OPTIMISM. IT CONVEYS CAUTION, CONCERN, A FEELING THAT WITH LUCK AND A LOT OF WISDOM ISRAEL AND EGYPT CAN PRODUCE THE FLEXIBILITY THAT WILL YIELD AN AGREEMENT.

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KISSINGER'S PLAN IS TO RETURN TO ISRAEL TONIGHT AFTER A

SIX-HOUR STOPOVER HERE, MORE OR LESS A COURTESY STOP, AS

SYRIA IS NOT IN THE PICTURE AT THE MOMENT. KISSINGER DOES NOT EXPECT SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS BUT HE WANTS TO DISCUSS WHAT HE LEARNED IN CAIRO AND THEN GIVE BOTH SIDES TWO TO THREE WEEKS TO THINK HOW THEY CAN ADJUST THEIR CURRENT POSITIONS TO PRODUCE AN AGREEMENT. DESPITE EVERYTHING, KISSINGER THINKS AN AGREEMENT IS POSSIBLE NEXT MONTH.

2. KALB (CBS RADIO, DAMASCUS): KISSINGER FLEW INTO DAMASCUS FOR COURTESY TALKS WITH ASSAD, A RADICAL ARAB LEADER WHO HAS LATELY BEGUN TO SHOW SIGNS OF BEING WILLING TO NEGOTIATE A SECOND-STAGE AGREEMENT WITH ISRAEL, RATHER THAN RUSH BACK TO GENEVA, AS THE RUSSIANS PREFER. NEVERTHELESS, KISSINGER IS NOT HERE TO NEGOTIATE, NOR TO INVOLVE SYRIA IN THE CURRENT EFFORT TO WORK OUT ANOTHER SINAI AGREEMENT BETWEEN ISRAEL AND EGYPT. HE LEFT CAIRO THIS MORNING, DECLARING THAT HIS TALKS WITH SADAT WERE VERY POSITIVE, BUT ON THE FLIGHT HERE REPORTERS WERE GIVEN A SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT IMPRESSION, ONE HIGH OFFICIAL SAYING, THAT NO SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS COULD BE MADE IN ISRAEL TONIGHT OR TOMORROW DURING KISSINGER'S FOLLOW-UP TALKS THERE; AND IF ONE GOES JUST BY THE RHETORIC HEARD FROM BOTH SIDES THE ISSUES DIVIDING THEM APPEAR TO BE IRRECONCILABLE, AT LEAST AT THIS TIME. THAT DOES NOT MEAN THAT KISSINGER THINKS EVERYTHING IS HOPELESS. "WE ARE STILL IN BUSINESS," HE TOLD REPORTERS; IT IS JUST THAT HE NOW UNDERSTANDS THE DEEP GULF SEPARATING THE TWO SIDES BETTER, BUT STILL REMAINS BASICALLY OPTIMISTIC THAT HE CAN BRIDGE THE GULF AND PRODUCE AN AGREEMENT DURING HIS MARCH VISIT TO THE MIDDLE EAST.

3. KALB (CBS RADIO, CAIRO): KISSINGER CONVEYED AN IMPRESSION OF OPTIMISM. "I AM HOPEFUL," HE SAID, "INDEED CONFIDENT OF PROGRESS." SADAT ECHOED THIS LINE. "I AM VERY HAPPY," HE SAID, "I AM OPTIMISTIC." BUT DESPITE THEIR ATTEMPT TO BE UPBEAT, THERE IS STILL NO SIGN OF ANY MAJOR BREAKTHROUGH, AND THERE IS ONE SIGN KISSINGER MAY UNCLASSIFIED

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ALREADY BE TRIMMING HIS EXPECTATIONS. ONE OFFICIAL SUGGESTED THAT KISSINGER MAY INDEED PUSH FOR ONLY A LIMITED DEAL AT THIS TIME, A MODEST ISRAELI PULLBACK, NOT INCLUDING THE PASSES OR THE OIL FIELDS, IN AN EXCHANGE FOR AN 18-MONTH SUSPENSION OF BELLIGERENCY BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES -- ENOUGH TIME IN KISSINGER'S MIND FOR THE GENEVA CONFERENCE TO MEET AND THRASH OUT THE BIGGER ISSUES STILL DIVIDING THE TWO SIDES. OFFICIALS STRESS THAT

A LIMITED DEAL IS IN A SENSE AS GOOD AS A BIG ONE. IT
EASES TENSIONS, IT HOLDS OFF WAR AND ANOTHER POSSIBLE OIL

EMBARGO, AND IT ALLOWS FOR THE POSSIBILITY OF FURTHER
DIPLOMATIC PROGRESS.

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